Serial No.: 09/741,986   Attorney's Docket No.:10559-376001

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (original) A software management system, comprising:

a vendor package template that provides a script to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software package;

a package importer to receive said at least one software package, where said package importer creates an X- package document based on said vendor package template; and

a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at a target computer.

2. (currently amended) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package importer receives an importing user identity for recording.

3. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said at least one software package includes packages from different vendors.

4. (original) The software management system of claim 3, wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set of attributes that allows said at least one software packages to be managed in a single user interface.

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5. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package importer tags said X-package with a signature.

6. (original) The software management system of claim 5, further comprising:

an authentication element to provide verification of the X-package by validating the signature in the X-package with a list of certificates trusted by the target computer.

7. (original) The software management system of claim 6, further comprising:

a script extractor to extract an X-package script.

8. (original) The software management system of claim 7, wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting with a vendor-specific package agent.

9. (original) The software management system of claim 7, wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting with multiple operating systems.

10. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package further includes a name of a user who imported said at least one software package.

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11. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package further includes hash of package files included in said at least one software package.

12. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent checks relevant operating system of said at least one software package.

13. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent downloads any needed files.

14. (original) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent reports status.

15. (original) A software management system, comprising:

a distribution management server including:

a vendor package template that provides a script to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software package; and

a package importer to receive said at least one software package, said package importer creates an X-package document based on said vendor package template, where said package importer tags said X-package with a signature;

a plurality of target computers, each target computer including:

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an authentication element to provide verification of the X-package by validating the signature in the X-package with a list of certificates trusted by the target computer;

a script extractor to extract an X-package script; and

a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at the target computer.

16. (original) The software management system of claim 15, wherein said at least one software package includes packages from different vendors.

17. (original) The software management system of claim 16, wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set of attributes that allows said at least one software packages to be managed in a single user interface.

18. (original) A method for distributing vendor-specific software to target computers, comprising:

importing the vendor-specific software using a vendor package template to create an X-package having a script;

transferring said X-package to target computers; and

processing said X-package script.

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19. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

authenticating the X-package by validating a signature on said X-package.

20. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising: extracting the script from said X-package for processing.

21. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said processing said X-package script includes checking a relevant operating system of the vendor-specific software.

22. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said processing said X-package script includes downloading all relevant files.

23. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said processing said X-package script includes reporting status.

24. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising a machine-readable storage medium having executable instructions operable to cause one or more ~~that enable the~~ machines to perform operations comprising:

import ~~the~~ vendor-specific software using a vendor package template to create an X-package having a script;

transfer said X-package to target computers; and

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process said X-package script.

25. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the operations further comprise comprising:

authenticate the X-package by validating a signature on said X-package.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the operations further comprise comprising:

extract the script from said X-package for processing.

27. (new) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package document includes Extensible Markup Language (XML).

28. (new) The software management system of claim 2, wherein said package importer verifies the importing user identity by checking an access control list.